Foreign visit

1722. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister and other Ministers of the Union Government visited abroad from August, 2002 to till date;

(b) if so, the details of the each visit;

(c) the details of the persons/officials who accompanied them during these visits, separately;

(d) the expenses occurred during each visit, Minister-wise and tour-wise, separately; and

(e) the outcome of each visit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (e) Information is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House.

Indo-Iran Gas Pipe-Line

1723. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposed Indo-Iran Gas Pipe-line Project has been held up due to the tension on the Line of Control; and

(b) if so, the action taken to safeguard the energy transit and regional pipe-lines in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean to ensure security of the pipe-lines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The Joint Committee constituted by India and Iran in May, 2000 to study all aspects, of supply of Iranian gas to India, including different modes of transportation, route options and related political, security, economic and technical issues, has been continuing with its mandated work. So far the Committee has held five meetings, the last being held at Tehran in August, 2002. Work related to feasibility studies is in progress.

India and Iran are firmly committed to establish a long-term, cost effective and secure mode of transfer of gas from Iran to India.